

## **An Introduction to the Quraan**

All praise is due only to Allaah. We laud Him and beseech His aid and beg forgiveness only from Him and believe in Him and rely solely on Him. We seek salvation in Him from the evils of our inner selves and the vices of our actions. There is none to misguide one whom Allaah intends to guide. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship but Allaah, the One who has no partner. I also testify that Hadhrat Muhammad (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) is the faithful servant and the Last Rasul of Allaah. May Allaah Ta'ala's mercy be on him, his family and his Sahabaah (RA) and may He bless them and raise their status.

Nabi Muhammad (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam), the most revered personality of all times was born on a Monday on either 8th or the 9th or 12th of Rabee'ul Awwal. There is difference of opinion about the date but not about the day. It is estimated that Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) was born 6155 years after Aadam (Alayhis Salaam), about 3913 years after Nooh's (Alayhis Salaam) flood, about 2832 years after Ebrahim (Alayhis Salaam), about 2,287 years after Moosa (Alayhis Salaam) and 570 years after the birth of Isa (Alayhis Salaam).

### ***The Earlier Prophets and their Books***

There is a tradition in the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal that Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) said, "Between Aadam (Alayhis Salaam) and me, Allaah sent a hundred and twenty-four thousand (124000) Nabis, of whom three hundred and fifteen (315) were entrusted with a Book."

In the Quraan, we come across a few references to the books revealed to Adam (Alayhis Salaam), the first Nabi.

Hadhrat Aadam's (Alayhis Salaam) son, Hadhrat Shith (Alayhis Salaam) was also a Nabi. It is suggested in some accounts that a few scriptures were revealed to him. Parts of a book attributed to Hadhrat Idrees (Alayhis Salaam), one of the earliest Nabis, were found only recently. A few scrolls were discovered in some caves near the Dead Sea in Palestine. The book

contains a prophecy about Nabi (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) which is also incorporated in the "Letters of Jehovah" in the *New Testament*.

After Hadhrat Idrees (Alayhis Salaam), we come across a few references to Hadhrat Nooh (Alayhis Salaam). According to the Sabeans, they once possessed Noah's entire Book that is now extinct. Only, some four or five lines remain which deal with morality. Hadhrat Nooh (Alayhis Salaam) is followed by Hadhrat Ebrahim (Alayhis Salaam).

The Parsis claim Zoroaster as their Nabi; this is possible because *The Quraan* mentions the Magians (22: 17) whose religion is based on *The Avesta*, a book revealed to Zoroaster. Only about one-tenth of this version of *The Avesta* is available to us, the rest has disappeared. It comprises some details about prayers and a few commandments. *The Avesta*, among other things, contains the following statement of Zoroaster, 'I have not perfected the religion; his name will be 'Mercy for the entire universe'. This reminds one of The Qur'aanic verses in which Muhammad (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) has been so called (*See Quraan 21: 107*).

In India, too, some religious scriptures are to be found. Hindus believe them to be revealed by Allaah. Among these Noble books are the *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, the *Upanishads* and others. In addition to these ancient books, there are others with which Muslims are quite familiar, i.e. *The Torah*, *The Zabur* (Psalms) and *The Injeel* (Evangel). The Book revealed to Moosa (Alayhis Salaam) is generally referred to him. The word '*Torah*' means law. The Jews attribute five books to Moosa (Alayhis Salaam). The fifth is called 'Deuteronomy', which means retelling of old accounts, their updating and elaboration.

In the beginning, the fifth book was not available to the Jews. It was six hundred years after Moosa (Alayhis Salaam) that a man brought a book to the then Jewish ruler and said that he had found it in a cave. When Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of Iraq, invaded Palestine, he collected all the manuscripts of *The Torah* and set fire to them. Not a single copy has survived.

Muslims usually mention *The Psalms* or *The Zabur* after *The Torah*. *The Zabur* is also considered an independent scripture like *The Torah* and *The Bible*. Muslims generally believe that *Injeel* (Evangel, Gospel) was an independent book which was revealed to *Isa* (Alayhis Salaam) According to Christian historians, there were more than seventy *Gospels*. Most of them were discarded as being of dubious nature and only four were considered reliable. Four persons in succession wrote biographies of Jesus and each called it a Gospel. What we have by the name of *Injeel* is only a collection of biographies. We can call it the "Life of Jesus", like the biographies of Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) written by Muslim scholars.

None of the books revealed to ancient Nabi's has reached us in its entirety. That is why Allaah willed that a book containing all the commandments should be made available to man and that its authenticity should be preserved for all times to come. Such a book is *The Quraan*.

## ***The Necessity for Revelation***

Allaah Subhaanahu WaTa'aala has placed His entire creation at man's service. Therefore, after having arrived in this world, man is left with two unavoidable choices. The first is that he uses this world and its contents in a correct and justified manner. The second that he uses them, bearing in mind

the commands of Allaah Ta'aala so that he does not commit any action which is contrary to the pleasure of Allaah Ta'aala.

To carry these responsibilities man needs education. Allaah Ta'aala has made available three means through which man attains knowledge of the aforementioned things. One is man's senses i.e., sight, hearing, taste and feeling. The second is through man's intellect, and the third is through revelation.

The knowledge that comes through revelation is not attainable through the senses or through one's intellect. For His revelation Allaah Ta'aala chooses one of His servants as His Rasul (messenger) and reveals His word unto Him. This is what is termed as 'Wahy' revelation. It is evident that revelation is not solely an essential of one's religious belief but a logical necessity. Rejecting it is, in reality, a rejection of the complete wisdom of Allaah Ta'aala.

## ***The Meaning of the word Quraan***

The majority of the Ulema believe that the word Al Quraan is derived from *Qara'a Yaqra'u*, which means 'to collect'. This word was also commonly used to refer to the reading of written statements, which are a collection of letters and the words. Others say that Al Quraan is so named because it collects the fruits of all the earlier Divine books, while others say that it collects all knowledge.

The Arabic word 'Quraan' is derived from the root word *Qara'a* which has various meanings, such as 'to read' (*Surah 17: 93*), 'to recite' (*Surah 75: 18, 17, 46*) etc. Quraan is a verbal noun and hence it means 'reading' or 'recitation'. As used in the Quraan itself (*Surah 17: 92*), the word refers to the revelation from Allaah in the broad sense. However, the word Quraan was not always restricted to refer to the written form in the shape of a book, as we have it before us today. The Quraan refers to revelation to Nabi Muhammad (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) only, while the revelation to other prophets has been referred to by different names (eg. Torah, Injeel, Kitaab etc.).

## ***The Quraan and its Names***

The Quraan has numerous titles and names. In Arabic, it is usually mentioned with the addition of such lofty attributes as:

- 'Al Quraan al Kareem' The Bounteous, Noble or Honourable.

- 'Al Quraan al Hakeem' The Full of Wisdom.

- 'Al Quraan al Majeed' The Glorious.

- 'Al Quraan al 'Adheem' The Great or Sublime.

There is also 'Al Quraan Dhidh Dhikr', which is variously translated as 'possessing eminence' or 'containing remembrance' or, 'full of admonition', while Rodwell sees it as 'full of warning'.

## ***Definitions of Terms***

The word '*Surah*' means literally eminence or high degree, and refers to any step of a structure. In The Quraan itself it is applied to a chapter of The Quraan, either because of its eminence or because each chapter is, as it were, a distinct degree or step in the whole Book, which is thus compared to a structure. The chapters of The Noble Quraan are of varying lengths, the longest comprising fully one-twelfth of the entire Quraan and the smallest containing only three verses.

Originally, the word '*Aayah*' meant an apparent sign or mark. In this sense, it comes to mean a miracle, but it also signifies a communication from Allaah, and is applied as such to a verse of The Noble Quraan as well as to a revelation

or a law. The highest number of verses in a chapter is 286 and the smallest only three.

## ***THE NAMES OF CHAPTERS (SURAHS)***

It is an accepted fact that all 114 chapters (*Surahs*) of The Quraan were divinely named, i.e. their names were given by Allaah. (*Tarikh al Quraan (Al Abyaari) p. 67/8*) We do find that certain chapters (*Surahs*) have more than one name.

### ***The Eternal Existence of the Quraan***

It is our belief that The Quraan is not a creation of Allaah, it was not created by Allaah over a certain period of time or at a particular point in time. Rather, it always existed. (*Tahdhib Sharh as Sunnusiyyah p. 55-60/ Manaahil v.1 p 18*).

The miraculous speech of Allaah was revealed to the seal of all Prophets and Messengers, through the medium of the trustworthy Angel Jibr'ael (AS). The Quraan has been documented in book form and has been transmitted to us in succession. Its mere recital is a form of worship. It starts with *Surah Al Faatiha* and concludes with *Surah an Naas*. (*At Tibaayan p. 8*).

### ***Kinds of Wahy***

**One classification is on basis of recitation:**

- 1. WAHY MATLOO.** That *wahy* from Allaah which is recited regularly. This term is used to refer to Al Quraan i.e., *Wahy Matloo* is that in which both words and meaning are from Allaah.
- 2. WAHY GAIR MATLOO.** That *wahy* from Allaah to Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) which is not recorded in Al Quraan and is not recited like Al Quraan. In this the meaning is from Allaah and words are from Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam).

### ***How Revelation was sent to Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam)?***

Revelation to Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) took numerous forms. Briefly, they are:

1. Direct dialogue between Allaah and His Rasul (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam).
2. Through dreams
3. Through Jibr'ael (AS) in his original form as an Angel.
4. Through Jibr'ael (AS) in a human form.
5. Through Jibr'ael (AS) in an invisible form.
6. By means of a tingling sound in Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s ear. This was the most difficult way of receiving revelation.

### ***Times of Revelation***

Parts of The Quraan were revealed during the day, others at night, and some were revealed in winter, summer, and others while Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) was travelling.

**N. B.** The most common ways were (4) and (5)

### ***The Stages The Quraan passed through in its Descent***

The Quraan passed through three stages in its descent and its revelation to Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) .

#### **THE FIRST STAGE**

The Quraan descended to the *Al Lowhul Mahfoodh* The Preserved Tablet came to being in the seventh heaven. How and when only Allaah knows. The Quraan descended in full and not as isolated *Surahs* and *Aayaat*.

### **THE SECOND STAGE**

The Quraan descended to Baytul Izzah or *Al Baytul Ma'moor*, which is a place above and beyond the Ka'bah in the nearest heaven. The Quraan was revealed to Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) over a period of 23 years. Besides, many traditions narrated by Ibn Abbaas (RA) substantiate this descent.

### **THE THIRD STAGE**

The Quraan was revealed to Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) through the medium of Jibr'a'el (Alayhis Salaam).

## ***The Quraan's Descent to the First Sky***

Ibn Abbaas (RA) is reported to have said: "The Quraan was revealed in the month of Ramadhaan, in the night of power, in its complete form to the first sky." He then continued, "It was then stored in a place called Baytul Izzah. From here, Jibra'eel (Alayhis Salaam) descended with the verses, as commanded by the Almighty Allaah, throughout the period of prophethood." (*Tafseer ibn Abi Haatim vol . 1 p. 310/311 Injeel no. 1650, Tabri vol . 2 p. 198 Injeel no. 2315, Ibn Katheer vol. 1 p. 322*)

## ***The Physical State of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) at the times of Revelation***

Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) was one of the scribes of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). He reports that on an occasion when he was called to write down the revelation, he sat next to Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s leg (thigh) happened to rest on his. In this posture Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) received more *Wahy* and Zaid (RA) says, "I never felt anything more heavy than the thigh of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) (at the time of revelation)." (Abu Dawood Vol. 7 p.132 Injeel no.2504). This was reported in regard to the revelation of verse 95 of *Surah An Nisaa*.

Asmaa bint Yazeed (RA) is reported to have said, "Surah Al Maa'idah was revealed to Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) while he was seated on his she-camel called 'Adba'. It started wilting under his weight until we feared something of the camel might break." (*Ahmad vol. 6 p. 458*).

Abdullaah bin Amr (RA) reports the same occurrence, "Surah Al Maa'idah was revealed to Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) whilst riding his animal. He dismounted the animal, for it started wilting under him being unable to carry him."

Umar (RA) said, "When *Wahy* was descending on Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam), a sound like the buzzing of bees could be heard by his face ." (*Ahmad vol. I. P34*).

Aishah (RA) says that at the end of this narration, "I have indeed seen Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) receiving *Wahy* on days of extreme cold. When the process of *Wahy* had ended, his forehead would be dripping wet because of his perspiring." (*Al Bukhari vol. 1 p. 25/6 Injeel no. 2*).

## ***The First Revelation***

Ikramah (RA) reports that ibn Abbaas (RA) said, "The Messenger of Allaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) first received revelation at the age of forty and

then stayed in Makkah for thirteen years. He was then commanded to migrate, whereupon he migrated to Madinah and stayed there for ten years until he passed away (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam).” (*Al Bukhari vol. 7 p.199 Injeel no. 3851*). The first revelation of The Quraan came on the 15<sup>th</sup> night in the month of Ramadhaan in the 41<sup>st</sup> year after the birth of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). Its first Surah, as is mentioned earlier, was revealed in the cave Hira, when the verse "Recite in the name of thy Rabb who created..." came into being. The last verse of The Quraan to be revealed was, "This day We have perfected for you your Religion..." This was revealed on the 9<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Hijrah (63<sup>rd</sup> year of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s life). Considering this, we therefore learn that the period in which The Quraan was revealed in entirety, was twenty-two years, two months and twenty-two days.

The first revelation that the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) received is in the first verses from *Surah Al Alaq* (96: 1-3, according to *others* 1-5):

'Read in the name of your Rabb, who created, created man from a clot. Read! And your Rabb is most bountiful. (He who taught) the use of the pen, taught man which he knew not.'

The remainder of *Surah* 96, which consists of 19 *Aayaat*, was to be revealed at a later occasion. The Second Revelation

The second *Surah* that was revealed after the period of *Fatrah*, according to the scholars of The Quraan, was probably a comparatively large portion of *Surah Al Qalam* (*Surah* 68). The third *Surah* to have been revealed was *Surah Al Muddaththir* (*Surah* 74); and the fourth in order of revelation was the remaining portion of *Surah Al Alaq* (*Surah* 96, *Aayaats* 6-19); then followed *Surah Al Muzzamil* (*Surah* 73).

The second portion of The Quraan revealed to the Nabi Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) was the beginning of *Surah Al Muddaththir* (74:1-5).

## ***Other Early Revelations***

Many hold that *Surah Al Muzzammil* (73) was the next revelation. According to others, *Surah Al Faatiha* (1) was the third *Surah* to be revealed. (*Suyooti Al Itqaan*, v. 1, p. 24).

## ***The Last Revelation***

Many Muslim scholars agree that the last revelation was *Surah* 2, verse 281: "And fear the day when you shall be brought back to Allaah. There shall every soul be paid what it earned and none shall be dealt with unjustly.'

Others hold that *Surah* 5, verse 4 was the last to be revealed:

'This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islaam as your religion.'

## ***The Last Complete Surah to Be Revealed***

It is reported by Ubaydullaah bin Abdullaah bin Utbah (RA) that ibn Abbaas (RA) once asked him. "Do you know which chapter was the last to be revealed in its complete form?"

Ubaydullaah replied, "Yes, it was, *Eetha Jaa a Nasr Rullaahi wal fath*." Ibn Abbaas (RA) replied, "You have spoken the truth."

## ***The Preservation of the Quraan***

In the first place, it is necessary to know that The Quraan is in Arabic. Why was Arabic chosen as the language of The Book revealed to the Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)? It is an established fact that all languages gradually change. Look at Urdu, for example. It is with great difficulty that

we are able to understand a book written in Urdu some five hundred years ago. This is true of all languages of the world. In English, Chaucer for example, who lived some five or six hundred years ago, can be fully understood today only by a few learned scholars. This is also true of all other old and new languages. All languages change and slowly become archaic. Had Allaah's last message been revealed in a language subject to similar change, it would have been necessary for Allaah to give us yet another book in the twentieth century so that we could understand it. Like other books of a long time ago, The Quraan, too would have become incomprehensible. Here is one language in the world that is exempt from the law of change, it is Arabic. It is a verifiable fact that the Arabic that we hear on radio or read in the press today is the same as that of the day of Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) i.e. in the language of The Quraan and Injeel. There is no difference between the two by way of meaning of words, grammar, spelling or pronunciation. Had Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) been amongst us today and were we to speak to him in the contemporary Arabic idiom, he would have been able to understand every word spoken to him. Were Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) to respond to us we would be able to fully understand every word of his speech. There is no difference between the Arabic of today and the Arabic of yesterday. From this, we conclude that The Book revealed to Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) had to be in a language that was not subject to change. That is why Arabic was chosen. In addition to other characteristics such as eloquence, fluency, melody, etc, Arabic has a quality, which we can all witness for ourselves is the unchangeable character of the Arabic language. For this we should be grateful to the Arabs who have not adopted different dialects as their language. Their language of literature and communication is the same today as was current in the days of Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam).

## ***The Authorship of the Quraan***

Had Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) in fact learnt from a Christian monk, a bishop, a Jewish person, or even from Christian slaves then the following might have happened;

Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) would never have denied it because he was respected all his life for both preaching and telling the truth. He could never have preached a faith so radically different from Christianity and Judaism, particularly with respect to their basic creeds.

Under the circumstances, and considering the climate of antagonism existing between him and those who did not believe in his message, particularly the Jews and polytheists, his teacher's name could scarcely have remained unknown throughout all the years of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s propagation.

Whoever taught him, would surely have written a book with at least a chapter similar to The Qur'aanic revelations.

The Jews, referred to in The Quraan as 'the people of the book' had persistently cross-examined him, defying him and hiding their books from others. How then could they have taught him at the same time? If they had taught him anything, would they not have been careful to suppress the uncomplimentary references to them contained in The Quraan.

Had Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) not been sincere in his prophethood and honest in delivering the message, his relatives his friends



and followers would never have been so devoted to him, nor would they have clung to his teachings in the face of devastating hardship and persecution. It is a remarkable tribute to the character of Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and to those of his friends and followers that not one of them ever betrayed him.

The Quraan confirms certain Biblical records of previous prophets. Since the historical events in the Bible were originally revealed by Allaah to Moses and other prophets, this confirms that the source is one and divine?

If a divine authorship has never been claimed for the Bible by a Christian, why should

Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) have risked additional persecution from his enemies by claiming The Quraan to have been revealed by Allaah if this were not so?

## ***Challenge Unanswered***

Though the Makkans failed to accept the challenge and to produce ten verses similar in style and in precept to the verses of the Noble Quraan, they continued challenging Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) impudently and presumptuously. Almighty Allaah once more comes to the aid of His Noble Messenger (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and reveals to him another challenge to the obstinate Makkans, which is mentioned in Surah Yoonus (10: 38) of the Noble Quraan. This time the challenge is a mild one:

'Or do they say, He has forged it? Say, then bring One chapter like this and invite whom you can beside Allaah, if you are truthful.' (Surah Yoonus 10: 38)

In *Surah Baqarah* (2: 23) the same challenge is repeated in these words:

'And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to our servant, then produce One Chapter like it and call on your helpers besides Allaah if you are truthful.'

In issuing this challenge, Almighty Allaah prophesied in the succeeding verse their inability and failure to produce a chapter like The Quraan and warned them of the grave consequences awaiting the disbelievers in these words:

'But if you do (it) not AND NEVER SHALL YOU DO (it) then be on your guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel, it is prepared for the disbelievers.'

The students of history know that although the Arabs proudly boasted about their superb mastery of rhetoric expressions and their eloquent styles of speech and therefore dubbed the rest of the people of the world as 'A'aajim' (i.e. dumb people) yet they completely failed to produce a single verse similar to the verses of the Noble Quraan.

Almighty Allaah further defends Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and clears him of this unfounded and baseless allegation and consoles his distressed soul in *Surah Ankaboot* (29: 48). This disproves for all times the falsehood and the impossibility of the allegations against Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) that he forged The Quraan:

'And you (Oh Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)) DID NOT RECITE before it any book, nor DID YOU TRANSCRIBE one with your right hand for then could those who say untrue things have doubted.' (Surah Ankaboot 29:48)

The infidels of Makkah were aware that Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) was an unlettered man; he knew neither to read nor to write. To allege that he forged the verses of the Noble Quraan arose from sheer bigotry, extreme jealousy and deep-rooted malice against Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam).



# **Collection of The Revelations during Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s lifetime**

The Arabs of that time were well known for their excellent memory. They remembered by heart hundreds of poems of the Jahilliyaah period as well as the many details of the genealogy tables (Ansaab) of their families. They even remembered genealogies of their horses and camels! Therefore, it is not surprising that the Sahabah (RA) had committed the whole Quraan to memory in the lifetime of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam).

The Revelations used to be written down from the very early days of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s receiving them. In Madinah, Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) had several persons who wrote down revelations when they were revealed. Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) himself instructed his scribes where to plan the different revealed verses, and thus determined the order and arrangement. Altogether there were approximately 43 Sahaaba (RA) appointed as official scribes. (*Tarikh al Quraan (Shaheen)* p. 119, *At Tibyaan al Quraan* p. 51/2).

The revelations were written on the branches of palm trees stripped of their leaves as well as on the bark of the palm tree. They were also written on pieces of cloth and leather, on the wide shoulder blades of certain animals and were even carved in stone and rock. (*Al Bukhari* v. 8 p. 627 *Hadeeth* no. 4986, *Tarikh al Quraan (Al Abyaari)* p. 86).

The order and arrangement of the verses was well known to the Muslims and strictly observed by them. The Angel Jibra'eel (Alayhis Salaam) went through all the revelations with Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) each year in Ramadhaan, and went through the recorded Quraan twice in the year in which Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) passed away. There are numerous reports about the existence of the written Quraan in the form of a book or piece of writing (kitaab) during the lifetime of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam).

## **Readers of the Quraan among the Companions**

Suyooti (*Itqaan* v. 1p. 124) mentions more than twenty well known persons who memorized the revelation, among them were Abu Bakr (RA), Umar (RA), Uthmaan (RA), Ali (RA), Ibn Mas'ood (RA), Abu Hurairah (RA), Abdullaah bin Abbaas (RA), Abdullaah bin Amr bin Al Aas (RA), Aisha (RA), Hafsaah (RA), and Umme Salma (RA).

From among them, Nabi (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) himself recommended four persons especially, according to the narration of Masrooq:

Abdullaah bin Amr mentioned Abdullaah bin Mas'ood and said: "I shall forever love that man for I heard Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) saying: "Take (learn) The Quraan from four: 'Abdullaah bin Mas'ood (RA), Salim (RA), Mu'aadh (RA), and Ubai bin K'ab (RA).'" (*Bukhari* v. 1, No. 521) Another Injeel informs us about those Sahaaba (RA) who memorized The Quraan in its entirety and gone over it with Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) before his demise.

Narrated Qataadah: "I asked Anas bin Maalik (RA) Who collected The Quraan at the time of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) ?" He

replied, “Four, all of whom were from the Ansaar: Ubai bin K'ab (RA), Mu'aadh bin Jabal (RA), Zaid bin Thaabit (RA), and Abu Zaid (RA).” (*Al Bukhari v. 1 no. 525*).

## ***Memorisation of the Noble Quraan by the Companions (RA)***

Some Companions were very involved in teaching of The Quraan. Among the famous teachers of The Quraan, were the following six:

Uthmaan bin Affaan (RA) was the third Caliph of Islaam and one of the forerunners in the religion. Ali bin Abi Taalib (RA) was Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s cousin and he was the first youth to have accepted Islaam and later became the fourth Caliph of Islaam.

Ubai ibn K'ab (RA) was one of the scribes of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). Many were taught The Quraan by him. Among his students are the likes of Abu Hurairah (RA) and Abdullaah ibn Abbaas (RA). Ibn Abbaas (RA) reports Umar (RA) saying about him: “Ubai is the most knowledgeable among us about the reading of The Quraan” (*Al Bukhari v. 8 p. 664 Injeel no. 5005*).

Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) was a scribe of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) who played a major role in the compilation of The Quraan during the caliphate of both Abu Bakr (RA) and Uthmaan (RA).

Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (RA) was one of the seniors among the companions and one of the forerunners in Islaam. Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) said about him, “Whosoever wants to recite The Quraan in a fresh and tender manner as it was revealed, let him recite it like the recitation of ibn Umm Abd (referring to Abdullaah bin Mas'ood).” (*Ibn Maajah v. 1 p. 49 Injeel no. 138*).

Abu Moosa al Ash'ari (RA) was blessed with a beautiful voice that he constantly used for reciting The Quraan. Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) heard him once and remarked, “oh Abu Moosa, verily you have been given a flute from the flutes of the family of Dawood (Alayhis Salaam).” (*Al Bukhari v. 8, p. 170 Injeel no. 5048*).

The six companions mentioned above were well known and noted teachers of The Quraan. However, many others are also reported to have taught The Quraan. Among the Muhaajireen the following taught The Quraan: Abu Bakr (RA), Umar (RA), Talhah (RA), Sa'd (RA), Hudhaifah (RA), Abdullaah ibn Umar (RA), Salim (RA), Abdullaah ibn Abbaas (RA), Amr ibn Al Aas (RA), Mu'aawiyah (RA), Abdullaah ibn Zubair (RA), Abdullaah ibn as Saab (RA), Aishah (RA), Hafsah (RA), and Umm Salmah (RA).

Among the Ansaar there were Mu'aadh ibn Jabal (RA), Abu Darda (RA), Majma ibn Jariyah (RA) and Anas ibn Maalik (RA) who taught The Quraan to others.

Anas (RA) reports: “There are four who completed the memorization of the whole Quraan in the lifetime of Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and they are all from the Ansaar. (They are) Ubai (RA), Mu'aadh ibn Jabal (RA), Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) and Abu Zaid (RA).” When he was asked about the identity of Abu Zaid, he replied, “He is one of my uncles.” (*Al Bukhari v. 7*).

It is mentioned in another narration that Abu Darda (RA) also completed the memorization of The Quraan as well (*Al Bukhari v. 8 p. 664*). This would then bring the number of those who completed the memorization of the entire Quraan in Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s lifetime to five.

In addition to these five, all the other Companions were also memorizing The Quraan. The only difference is that these five companions were able to

complete the memorization while Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) was still alive.

It is mentioned that among the four Caliphates, only Uthmaan (RA) was able to complete its memorization although it was after Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s demise. (*Tarikh al Quraan (Shaheen)* p.122).

## ***The Collection of the Quraan during the Time of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA)***

Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) saw it as his personal responsibility to collect and safeguard the scattered parts of The Quraan during the time of his caliphate (term of office). The details, the incentives and the manner in which he accomplished this task, are stated by Hadhrat Zaid bin Thaabit (RA), “After the Battle of Yamaamah, many Huffaaz of The Quraan Kareem have been martyred and, if the Huffaaz of The Quraan Kareem keep on being martyred in this manner in different places, then I fear that a great portion of The Quraan might become extinct. Therefore, my opinion is that you begin the task of gathering The Quraan Kareem under your guidance.” I said to Umar (RA), “That which Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) himself had not done, how we could do it!”

Hadhrat Umar (RA) replied, “Allaah's *Qasam!* This task is nothing but virtuous.” Thereafter, Umar (RA) kept on telling me this until I too found it acceptable and my opinion was the very same as Umar (RA)'s. Thereafter, Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) said to me, “You are young and understanding. We have no mistrust regarding you. You had done the work of writing down the revelation under (the very eyes of) Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). Therefore, search for and gather the Aayaat of The Quraan Kareem.”

Hadhrat Zaid ibn Thaabit (RA) mentions that “Allaah's *Qasam!* If these pious leaders had commanded me to remove a certain mountain, then it would not have been such a weight on me as the task of gathering The Quraan.” I said to them, “How are you to do such work which Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) had not done?” Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) said, “Allaah's *Qasam!* This work is nothing but virtuous.” Thereafter, Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) kept on telling me this, until such a time that Allaah Ta'aala opened my chest to hold the very same opinion that was the opinion of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) and Hadhrat Umar (RA). Therefore, I began searching for Qur'aanic Aayaat and gathered The Quraan Kareem from the branches of date trees, stone tablets and people's chests.

For his important task of collecting The Quraan, the work of Hadhrat Zaid ibn Thaabit (RA) needs to be understood properly. As a Haafiz of The Quraan, he could have written The Quraan down from memory. Besides him too, there were hundreds of Huffaaz at that time. A group of them could also have written The Quraan Kareem.

A public announcement was made that whoever had any of the written Aayaat of The Quraan should bring them to Hadhrat Zaid (RA). When anyone brought him written Aayaat of The Quraan, then he would verify it in four ways.

**Firstly**, he would confirm its authenticity by checking it against recalling it from his memory.

**Secondly**, since Hadhrat Umar (RA) was also a Haafiz, Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) included him also in the task with Hadhrat Zaid (RA). Whenever

anyone brought an Aayah, then Hadhrat Zaid (RA) and Hadhrat Umar (RA) would jointly receive it.

**Thirdly**, written Aayaat would not be accepted until two trustworthy (reliable) witnesses would testify that his particular Aayah was written under the guidance of Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam).

**Thereafter**, these written Aayaat would be compared with the collection which had been prepared by different Sahabah (RA).

With such extreme caution, Hadhrat Zaid ibn Thaabit (RA) gathered the Qur'aanic Aayaat and wrote them in an orderly fashion on volumes of paper. Every *Surah* was written on a separate volume. Therefore, this copy of The Quraan consisted of many volumes. This first copy is known as 'Umm' and its special features were as follows:

1. In this copy, Qur'aanic Aayaat were arranged according to the order shown by Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) , but the *Surahs* were not arranged; each *Surah* was written separately.
2. In this copy, the seven letters of The Quraan were gathered.
3. In this copy those Aayaat were gathered whose recitation was not repealed.
4. The purpose for preparing this initial arranged copy prepared by unanimous verification of the whole nation was that, it could be referred to in times of necessity.

These written books of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) remained with him during his lifetime. Next, they remained with Hadhrat Umar (RA). After the martyrdom of Hadhrat Umar (RA), they were transferred to Ummul Mu'mineen. Hadhrat Hafsa (RA) . After her death, Marwaan ibn ul Hakam burnt them since, by this time the prepared books (volumes) of Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) were ready and the nation had unanimously agreed that, as regards to the mode of writing and the arrangement of *surahs* ,it was compulsory to follow those books (volumes). Marwaan ibn ul Hakam had decided that no such copy should remain which would be contrary to the final mode of writing and arrangement.

## ***THE OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF HADHRAT ABU BAKR (R)'s COMPILATION***

1. There was meticulous and intensive inquiry to verify the presented material.
2. Nothing was documented until it was proven that its revelation had not been abrogated.
3. There was consensus of the Ummah about the authenticity of what had been documented between the two covers of the Noble Quraan.
4. The comprehensiveness of this compilation ensured that it contained all the authentic forms of recitation.

### ***Extraordinary Care Taken by Zaid bin Thaabit in Compiling the Quraan Shareef***

Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) used to call some of his Sahaabah to write down the verses soon after they were revealed to him (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam). The writing down was usually done by Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) but others also used to do it. It is reported that there were up to 43 *Kaatibeen e Wahy* who were the original writers of the verses soon after revelation.

# ***The Compilation of the Quraan during the Time of Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA)***

The compilation of The Quraan is known to *Riwaayaat e Injeel* that Hadhrat Huzaifah (RA) was engaged in Jihaad (religious wars) in Aazar Beijaan and Armenia. There he noticed differences amongst the people about the Qiraa'aat of the Quraan Kareem. Therefore, immediately on his return to Madinah, he proceeded directly to Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) and requested, "Oh Ameerul Mu'mineen! Before this nation falls prey to differences and misunderstandings between people regarding The Quraan Kareem as happened to the Jews and Christians, (you) treat (remedy) it." Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) asked, "What is the matter?" Hadhrat Huzaifah (RA) explained, "I was included in Jihaad in Armenia. There, I noticed the people of Syria reading Ubai ibn Ka'b's Qiraa'ah that the people of Iraq had not heard and the people of Iraq reading the Qiraa'ah of Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (RA), which the people of Syria had not heard. As a result, the one group is branding the other as kaafir."

Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) himself had felt this fear before. It was reported to him that in Madinah itself, such incidents had occurred where one teacher of The Quraan Kareem had taught his students The Quraan according to a certain Qiraa'ah and another teacher would teach according to another Qiraa'ah. When the students of different teachers used to meet, difficulties would arise between them and, on occasions, this difference could be seen amongst the teachers who would judge one another's Qiraa'ah as wrong. When Hadhrat Huzaifah (RA) also drew attention to this fear, Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) gathered illustrious Sahabah (RA), deliberated with them and said, "I have been informed that some people are telling others such things that their Qiraa'ah is better than others, and this could lead to the degree of Kufr. Therefore, what are your opinions in this matter?" The Sahaabah (RA) themselves asked Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) "What have you thought?" He replied, "My opinion is that we get everyone to agree on one book so that no difference and disunity arises." The Sahabah (RA) approved of this opinion. Accordingly, Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) gathered the people together and delivered a sermon. He mentioned, "You people, being close to me in Madinah Tayyibah, are falsifying and differing from one another about the Qiraa'ah of The Quraan Kareem. From this, it is evident that those who are far away from me will be falsifying and differing from one another on a larger scale. Therefore, all people should unite and agree on a single copy of The Quraan Kareem which will be necessary for everyone to follow."

Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) requested Hadhrat Hafsaah (RA) to send to him those prepared volumes of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (R) that were in her possession. After copying them down into the books, they were to be returned. Hadhrat Hafsaah (RA) sent those volumes; Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) formed a body of 4 Sahaabah which consisted of Hadhrat Zaid ibn Thaabit (RA), Hadhrat Abdullaah ibn Zubair (RA), Hadhrat Sa'eed ibn ul Aas (RA) and Hadhrat Abdur Rahmaan ibn ul Haarith ibn ul Hishaam (RA). This body was commanded to prepare, after having copied from Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA)'s volumes, such books that consisted of arranged *Surahs*. Of these 4 Sahaabah, Hadhrat Zaid (RA) was an Ansaari and the remaining 3 dignitaries were Quraishi. Therefore, Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) said to them (the latter), "When you and Zaid (RA) differ about any part of The Quraan (differ about which

word pronunciation to use), then write it according to the Quraishi language, because The Quraan Kareem was revealed in their language.”

## ***Chronology of the Written Text***

Around 610 (A.D)	Rasulullah (S.A.W.)'s prophethood – message commences	1 <sup>st</sup> Revelation in the cave of Mount Hira	Transmitted orally. later written down
610 – 632	Rasulullah (S.A.W.) in Makkah and Madinah	Continuous revelation on numerous occasions	Transmitted orally to Rasulullah (S.A.W.). After memorisation by many, the revelation was written down by various Companions on the direct instruction of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) himself.
632	Rasulullah (S.A.W.)'s demise.	Last revelation a few days before this. At the demise of Rasulullah (S.A.W.), the revelation was completed.	Complete revelation was available both in the memories of various Companions as well as on various writing materials
632 – 634	Abu Bakr (R.A.)'s Caliphate		
633	During the Battle of Yamama, several Companions who knew the Qur'an by heart were martyred.	Abu Bakr (R.A.) instructs Zaid bin Thaabit (R.A.) to prepare a single copy of the complete revelation. During 1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> year after Rasulullah (S.A.W.)'s demise the entire revelation was copied onto sheets (suhuf).	Zaid bin Thaabit (R.A.) brings together all the revelations into the Suhuf from both oral as well as written sources, demanding two witnesses for each piece. The suhuf remain with Abu Bakr (R.A.)
634 – 644	Umar (R.A.) caliphate		The Suhuf remain with Umar (R.A.)
644 – 656	Uthman (R.A.) caliphate		The Suhuf remain with Hafsa bint Umar (R.A.)
653	Campaign against Armenia and Azerbaijan	Differences arose among Muslims about the correct recitation of the Quran. Uthman (R.A.) instructs Zaid together with three other Sahaabah to prepare copies from the suhuf kept with Hafsa (R.A.) Several copies of the entire revelation available throughout the Muslim lands.	Zaid and three Companions prepare a number of fresh copies from the suhuf. These copies are sent to the various Muslim regions to replace other material in circulation. Suhuf returned to Hafsa (R.A.). Uthman (R.A.) also keeps one copy (mushaf).

## ***Differences between Makkan and Madinian Surahs***

**The following are the distinct differences between the Makkan and Madinian Surahs:**

1. A large number of *Aayaat* of the Makkan *Surahs* are shorter, as is seen in the 30<sup>th</sup> part of The Quraan ( 'Amma), while the Madinian verses are longer.
2. The Makkan *Aayaat* do not provide details about theological matters, like the principles guiding the Salaah (prayers) and other modes of worships. These details are found mainly in the Madinian *Aayaat*. In the Makkan *Aayaat*, the teachings about the Tauheed (Unity of Allaah), Imaan (faith), Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam), the angels, the last day and the rewards and punishment are taught to the faithful.
3. Most of the *Surahs* of the group '*Mufasssal*', beginning with *Surah Qaaf* in the latter part of The Quraan, are Makkan.
4. All *Surahs* containing *Sajdah* (prostrations) are Makkan.
5. All *Aayaat* beginning with the word 'Kalla' are Makkan.
6. All references to the hypocrites are from the Madinian period except *Surah Ankaboot's* Verse eleven that is Makkan.
7. All the 19 *Surahs* with Huroof Tahajji are Makkan except *Surah Al Baqarah* and *Surah Aal Imraan*.



8. Most *Aayaat* containing address "Oh you who believe" and "Oh people of the book" are Madinian, while the address "Oh people" and "Oh mankind" are mostly Makkan.
9. Every *Surah* in which, the word "Kalla" meaning "most certainly not" appears is a Makki *Surah*. This word appears 33 times in 15 *Surahs* and all these *Aayaat* occur in the second half of The Quraan Kareem.
10. Every *Surah* that has a *Sajdah* (according to the Hanafi school of thought) is a Makki *Surah*.
11. Besides *Surah Al Baqarah*, every *Surah* in which mention is made of the incident of Aadam (A.S) and Iblees (shaytaan) is a Makki *Surah*.
12. Every *Surah* in which, permission for Jihaad is given or its laws are given, is a Madani *Surah*.
13. Every *Aayah* where mention is made of the Munaafiqeen (Hypocrites) is a Madani *Surah*.
14. In the Makki *Surahs*, the words "Yaa Ayyu Han Naas", and in the Madani *Surahs* the words "Yaa Ayyu Hal Latheena Aamanu", have been normally used as a form of address.
15. Makki *Surahs* and *Aayaat* are normally short, whereas Madani *Aayaat* and *Suwar* (plural of *Surah*) are lengthy and detailed.
16. In general, Makki *Surahs* prove the oneness of Allaah, Risaalat (Prophethood) and Aakhirah (Hereafter), the sketching of Hashr and Nashr (Qiyaamat), instructing Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) about patience and consolation, and the incidents of the previous nations. In the Makki *Surahs*, decrees and rules have been kept to a minimum. In contrast, the Madani *Surahs* outline the laws of heredity, sociality, the laws of Jihaad and battle, and penal laws and divine obligations (precepts).
17. The Makki *Surahs* emphasise opposition to idol worshipping. The Madani *Surahs* highlight opposition to the People of the Book and the Munaafiqeen (Hypocrites).
18. The Makki *Surahs* make extensive use of, metaphors, similes and examples. On the contrary, the Madani *Aayaat* are simple in style.

## ***Steps to Simplify Recitation***

After the above-mentioned great effort of Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA), to compile The Quraan, the nation agreed that it is impermissible to write The Quraan Kareem in a manner other than the Uthmaani mode. After this, all books were written according to this manner. By preparing copies of the Uthmaani books, the Sahaabah (RA) and Taabi'een (RA) circulated The Quraan Kareem on a large scale.

Up to this stage, because the copies of The Quraan Kareem did not have any pronunciation signs such as dots and vowel points, the foreigners had trouble in reciting it.

## ***Dots to aid Pronunciation***

There are different narrations about the first person who used pronunciation dots in copies of The Quraan Kareem. A few narrations state that this great work was firstly done by Hadhrat Abu Al Aswad Duali (RA), Some others say

that he had done this work under the instruction of Hadhrat Ali (RA) yet others have mentioned that the governor of Kufa, Ziyaad ibn Abi Afyaan had him do it. One narration says, that Hajjaaj ibn Yoosuf had it done by Hasan Basri (RA), Yahveh ibn Ya'mar (RA) and Nasr ibn 'Aasim Laithi (RA).

It is generally accepted that dots were first added to The Qur'aanic script by Abu Al Aswad ad Duali (Died 69 Hijri and his real name was Thalim ibn Amr ibn Sufyaan. (*Ghaayyah Anniyaahah v.1 p. 345/6*). This was done on the instruction of Ali (RA) when he witnessed the unnecessary faltering of non Arabic speaking readers of the Noble Quraan. Abu Al Aswad inserted dots using red ink to symbolize the sound on letters. (*Tarikh al Quraan (Shaheen) p. 137, Hadyu Ahlul Imaan p. 56*).

Khaleel ibn Ahmad (Khaleel ibn Ahmad al Farahidi Died 170 Hijri, *Ghaayyah Anniyaahah v.1 p. 275*), a famous grammarian, later improved this method of sound identification. He deleted the dots and replaced them with new symbols. He also introduced symbols for other applications such as the *Sukoon* (tranquil sound). *Madd* (lengthened sound) and the *Shaddah* (doubling over a consonant) (*Hadyu Ahlul Imaan p.56*).

## ***Vowel Signs***

As in the case of dots, initially the script of The Quraan Kareem did not have vowel points (*Fathah, Kasrah, Dhammah*). Here too there are different narrations about who was the first to use the vowel signs. A few narrations have mentioned this to be initially the work of Abu Al Aswad Duali (R.A). Others have said that Hajjaaj ibn Yoosuf had it done by Yahveh ibn Ya'mar and Nasr ibn 'Aasim Laithi (R.A).

It is also accepted that Abu Al Aswad Duali (RA) had initially accepted the vowel points. However, these vowel points weren't those which are used today. For a *Fathah (zabar)*, one dot was placed above the letter; for a *Kasrah (zer)* one dot below the letter; for a *Dhammah (pesh)* one dot in front of the letter and for a *Tanween*, two dots were fixed. Afterwards, Khaleel ibn Ahmad (R.A) used the signs of *Hamzah* and *Tashdeed*. Thereafter, Hajjaaj ibn Yoosuf had requested Yahveh ibn Ya'mar (R.A), Nasr ibn 'Aasim Laithi (R.A) and Hasan Basri (R.A) to insert both, dots and vowel points in The Quraan Kareem. On this occasion, to denote the vowel points, the present forms of *Fathah (zabar)*, *Kasrah (zer)* and *Dhammah (pesh)* were fixed instead of dots, so that they were not confused with the normal dots of letters.

## ***The Seven Sections of the Quraan***

It was the custom of the Sahaabah (RA) and the Taabi'een (R.A) to complete the recitation of one Quraan every week. For this purpose they had determined a certain amount of The Quraan for daily recitation which is termed as '*Hizb*' or '*Manzil*'. In this way the entire Quraan was divided into a total of seven *Ahzaab*.

## ***Subdivision into 30***

The Quraan Kareem is divided into 30 parts which are called 30 *Juz*. The division into *Juz* is not according to meaning but to simplify it to teach children. The Quraan Kareem was divided into 30 more or less equal parts. At the time of copying down the books, Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) had instructed that it be written in 30 separate books. Therefore, this division dates back to the time of Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA). This division had been made after the time of the Sahabah (RA) to simplify teaching of The Quraan.

## ***Printing of the Quraan Kareem***

When printing presses were invented, The Quraan Kareem was first printed at Hamburg in the year 1113 Hijri. One copy is found today in Daarul Kutuzov Al-Misriyyah. Thereafter, numerous Orientals had copies of The Quraan Kareem printed but they did not gain acceptance in the Islaamic world. From among the Muslims, Moula e Uthmaan was the first person who had a copy of The Quraan Kareem printed in the Russian town of St Petersburg in the year 1787. One copy of The Quraan Kareem was printed on stone. Today printed copies are found all over the world.

### ***Present day Mushafs***

There are seven main editions or ancient copies of The Quraan, two of which were published and used at Madinah, a third at Makkah, a fourth at Kufa, a fifth at Basra, a sixth in Syria, and a seventh entitled the common edition. Of these editions, the first edition has 6000 verses, the second and fifth 6214, the third 6219, the fourth 6236, the sixth 6226 and the last 6225. However, they all contain the same number of words 77639 and the same number of letters 323015.

Two other copies were also made and sent to Bahrain and Yemen respectively. The *Suhuf* were returned to Hafsa (RA). All other personal copies of The Quraan, whether complete or incomplete, were burnt. This was implemented by the order of Uthmaan (RA) and everyone responded to it. (*Tarikh al Quraan (Shaheen)* p.188).

Ali (R.A) is reported to have said when he heard someone speaking about Uthmaan (RA), "Be silent, for he did it by consultation with a large group of us (Sahaabah). And if I had to face what he had faced I would have walked the same path." Concerning the burning in particular he said, "Had Uthmaan (RA) not done it, I would have." (*Tarikh al Quraan (Al Abyaari)* p. 96, *Manaaahil v. 1* p. 188, *Tarikh al Quraan (Shaheen)* p.198).

### ***The Beauty of the Quraan***

The literary authorities at Al Azhar University in Cairo point out the following ways in which The Qur'aanic style transcends the power of man and defies imitation.

1. The melodious harmony of The Quraan reflects neither the sedentary softness of the townsmen, nor the nomadic roughness of the Bedouins. It possesses in right measure the sweetness of the former and the vigour of the latter.
2. The rhythms of the verses are more sustained than in prose and less patterned than in poetry.
3. The sentences come neither in prose form nor in the manner of poetry, but with a harmonious and melodic flow.
4. The sentences are constructed in an elegant style, which uses the least number of words, without being too brief, to express ideas of utmost richness.
5. The Qur'aanic words do not offend, neither because of their familiarity nor because of their extreme rarity, but express admirable nobility.
6. The conciseness of expression creates such a striking clarity that the least learned Arabic-speaking person can understand The Quraan without difficulty. At the same time there is such a profundity, inspiration and radiance in The Quraan that

it serves as the basis for the principles and rules of Islaamic sciences, arts, theology and the juridical sciences. Thus, it is almost impossible to express the ideas of the text by means of only one interpretation, either in Arabic or in any other language.

7. There is a perfect blend between the two opposing powers of reason, emotion, intellect and feeling. In the narrations, arguments, doctrines, laws and moral principles, the words have both persuasive teaching and emotive force. Throughout the whole Quraan, the language maintains its surprising solemnity, power and majesty.

## ***The Basic Purpose of the Quraan***

The Noble Quraan, as a divinely revealed Scripture serves as four basic functions to:

1. Invite man towards the right path of righteousness, peace, and unity.
2. Present clearly the necessary guidance for man's happiness and success in this transitory life and for salvation in the eternal life of the hereafter.
3. Explain Reality and Truth to men so that he may understand the purpose of life.
4. Warn man about wrong attitudes, the consequence of evil deeds and disobedience to Divine Commandments.

## ***Qur'aanic Messages***

When the infidels of Makkah forced the Muslims (who were yet small in number) to migrate to Abyssinia and live there as refugees. The infidels sent a delegation to Negus the Christian ruler of Abyssinia requesting him to oust this small group of Muslims from his country.

Negus summoned the Muslims and enquired about Islaam from Hadhrat J'afar (R.A). Hadhrat J'afar (R.A)'s reply to Negus is a masterpiece, drawing a comparison between pre, and post Islaamic Arabia of that time. He said:

“Oh king, a long period has passed over us in which the state of our ignorance was such that we had left one Rabb and was worshipping idols. To worship self-carved stones was our hallmark. Haraam eating, adultery, plundering, severing of blood relations, ignorant about the rights of neighbours, about kindness and justice, and about truth of beasts were our main features. In short, we lived a life of beasts, where strong ones would feel proud of devouring the weak.

See the miracle of Mercy that Merciful Allaah Ta'aala sent a great Nabi (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) among us whose genealogy and truthfulness we knew very well, on whose trustworthiness both friends and enemies were witness and who the nation was calling by the title of '*Ameen*' trustworthy.

He taught us the lesson of The Oneness of Allaah Ta'aala, invited us towards One Allaah Ta'aala and told us that He has no partner and that idolatry is a sign of ignorance and hence is worth abandoning. Worshipping is the right of only One Allaah Ta'aala. He taught us to speak the truth, stressed that we become truthful, and he ordered us to honour and strengthen our blood relations. He taught us to treat neighbours and the weak with kindness. He saved us from the curse of humanity, i.e. adultery, by declaring it unlawful and obscene. He taught us whom to

marry and whom not to marry (Mahaarim and non-Mahaarim). He declared the telling of lies and the devouring of orphan's wealth as unlawful. He taught us Salaah and charity. He removed us out of the depths of bestiality and raised us up to the highest point of great humanity. Oh, king! We have accepted his teachings and believe in them with the core of our hearts. This is our fault against which this delegation of infidels is complaining.”

Next Hadhrat J'afar (RA) recited some verses from the *Surah Maryam* of The Quraan Shareef that moved the heart of Negus of Abyssinia, bringing tears to his eyes. He accepted the truthfulness of Islaam and embraced Islaam at the hands of Hadhrat J'afar (RA).

This is but one example of how the Qur'aanic teachings enlightened the world of darkness in a very short span of time. 'Al Quraan' is the name of this last and everlasting Divine Message that does not address any particular region, sect or race only, but it is a Message for the peace and success of the entire world and of all ages up to the Day of Judgement.

### ***What is a Miracle (I'jaaz)?***

According to Muslim scholars, the following five conditions must be met before an event can be accepted as a miracle from Allaah:

1. No one else but Allaah the Master of the world is able to do it.
2. It breaks the usual norms and differs from the laws of nature (not the laws of Allaah, but the normal way of nature).
3. It serves as proof of the truth and the claim of the Messenger.
4. It happens in accordance with the Messenger's claim.
5. The event occurs through the Messenger and no one else.

### ***Various Aspects of I'jaaz al Quraan***

The Muslim scholar Al Qurtubi (RA) (*d. 656/ 1258*) in his commentary on The Quraan has indicated the following ten aspects of the I'jaaz al Quraan:

1. Its language excels all other Arabic language.
2. Its style excels all other Arabic.
3. Its comprehensiveness cannot be matched.
4. Its legislation cannot be surpassed.
5. Its narrations about the unknown can come only from revelation.
6. Its content is being proven by findings of modern sciences.
7. It fulfills all that it promises both the good tidings and the threats.
8. The knowledge about creation is only now being slowly proven.
9. It fulfills human needs.
10. Its input on the heart of men is most powerful.

Others, such as Al Baaqillaani (*d. 403/ 1013*) in his book *I'jaazaat al Quraan* have discussed the following three aspects.

1. **The unlettered Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam).** Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) has been called *'Ummi'* unlettered.

Some say that Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) could neither read nor write at all, but 'Ummi' may also mean that he belonged to an uneducated people. Perhaps he did read or write a little or perhaps not at all. This does not affect his basic situation as 'Ummi'. He was neither a scholar nor a historian and neither was he a philosopher nor a priest. The common view is that he did not even read or write yet he proclaimed The Quraan and recited its many *Suwar* (plural of *Surah*) and *Aayaat* in which he informed the world about the earlier prophets, earlier scriptures and earlier events, all in spite of belonging to an uneducated people in one of the most remote parts of the world and far away from the centre of civilization and culture. This is also one of the *I'jaaz al Quraan*.

2. **The unseen world.** Another aspect of the *I'jaaz al Quraan* are the many prophesies The Quraan contains which are possible only with knowledge of the unseen world. The best-known prophecy concerns the historical victory of the Romans over the Persians, shortly after the Romans had been defeated by the Persians. This prophecy was fulfilled during Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam)'s lifetime, when the enemies of Islaam could themselves be witness to it.

'The Roman Empire has been defeated in a land close by; but they (even) after (this) defeat of theirs will soon be victorious within a few years' (30: 2-3)

The defeat of the Romans had taken place in 614/15, when Jerusalem was taken by the Persians, while the defeat of the Persians began only seven years later, when the Romans won the Battle at Issus in 622.

Another prophecy is the victory of Islaam over all other religions (*Surah 9:33; Surah 24:54*)

3. **No contradictions.** Portions of The Quraan were revealed over a period of 23 years, some were short and others were longer verses, on numerous occasions and in a variety of circumstances. Had The Quraan been the recitation of a human being, then most certainly there would have been contradictions. The Quraan itself has pointed out this fact:

'Do they not consider The Quraan? Had it been from other than Allaah they would surely have found therein much discrepancy' (*Surah 4: 82*)

## ***The Criteria of Truth***

How do we know that the revelation that is called The Quraan Shareef is the word of Allaah Ta'aala? The following criteria of truth can be easily understood by all.

**PERFECTION:** Since Allaah Ta'aala is All Knowing, His revelation must be perfect and accurate, free from mistakes, omissions, interpolations and multiple versions. It is free from contradictions in its narration.

**RATIONAL TEACHINGS:** Since Allaah Ta'aala bestowed reason and intellect to humankind, it is our duty to use these to distinguish truth from falsehood. True undistorted revelation from Allaah Ta'aala is rational and can be reasoned out by all unbiased minds.



**NO MYTHS OR SUPERSTITIONS:** The true revelations from Allaah Ta'aala are free from myths and superstitions that degrade the dignity of Allaah Ta'aala or man.

**SCIENTIFIC:** Since Allaah Ta'aala is the Creator of all knowledge, true revelation is scientific and can withstand the challenge of science at all times.

**PROPHECY:** Allaah Ta'aala is the Knower of the past, present and future. Thus His prophesies in His revelation will be fulfilled as prophesied.

**INIMITABLE BY MAN:** True revelation from Allaah Ta'aala is infallible and cannot be imitated by man. Allaah Ta'aala's true revelation is a living miracle, an open book that challenges all humankind to see and prove for themselves.

## ***Science and the Quraan***

The Quraan contains information about scientific facts which are in perfect agreement with the findings of man's scientific pursuits. Bucaille's approach in his book *'The Bible, The Quraan and Science'*, (Indianapolis, 1978), is more cautious. He writes: "*The Quraan does not contain a single statement that is assailable from the modern scientific point of view*" (Introduction, p. 8).

'The earth was previously part of the sun and only after separation from it did become a habitable place for mankind.' (Surah 21:30).

'All life originated from water.' (Surah 21:30).

'The universe was in shape of a fiery gas which The Quraan calls *Dukhaan*.' (Surah 41:11) 'The matter is made up of minute particles.' (Surah 10:62).

'The oxygen content of the air is reduced at higher altitudes.' (Surah 6: 125).

'In nature everything consists of complementary elements, not only in man and animals, but

also in plants and even inorganic matter.' (Surah 36:36).

'The embryo in the womb is enclosed by three coverings.' (Surah 39:6).

'Fertilization of certain plants is done by the wind.' (Surah 15:22).

'Microscopic organisms exist that are not visible to the naked eye, such as spermatozoon.' (Surah 96: 2)

'Each human being has permanent individual fingerprints.' (Surah 75:4).

## ***Subjects Discussed in the Quraan***

After carefully studying The Quraan, the Ulema have observed that four main subjects are discussed in The Quraan. They are:

**1.) Beliefs:** This is divided into two categories:

a. The affirmative or positive aspects in which the following is established:

Tauheed (The unity of Allaah)

Risaalah (The Apostleship of Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam).

The Aakhirah (Hereafter).

b. The negative aspects in which the following groups are refuted:

The Polytheists

The Christians

The Jews

The Hypocrites.

**2.) Legislation:** This is divided into three categories:

The laws pertaining to worship.

The laws pertaining to mutual human relationships, such as trade, justice, testimony, inheritance, etc.

The laws which are dual, i.e. they pertain to worship and to human relationships, such as marriage, divorce, criminal laws, jihad, etc.

**3.) Narratives and Happenings:** Two types are dealt with:

Stories of the past, especially of the Prophets. The purpose of these stories is for man to learn lessons from them.

Future events such as the signs of resurrection, description of hell and heaven etc.

Analysis of the Contents

Some Ulema like Qaazi Khan divide content matter of The Quraan in the following:

1000 Aayah on warnings.

1000 Aayaat on promises.

1000 Aayaat on orders.

1000 Aayaat on prohibitions.

1000 Aayaat on stories.

1000 Aayaat on lessons.

250 Aayaat relate to Halaal.

250 Aayaat relate to Haraam.

100 Aayaat relate to Dhikr.

10) 66 Aayaat relate to miscellaneous topics.

## ***THE LETTERS, VERSES, ETC. OF THE QURAAN***

Moulana Abdul Qayyoom Nadwi observes in his book *Taarikhe Quraan*, that on the authority of Aa'isha (R.A) The Quraan contains the following:

Verses: 6666

Words: 86430

Fathahs (zabars): 53243

Kasrahs (zers): 39582

Dhammahs (pesh): 8804

Mads: 771

Rukus: 540

Letters: 322671

Surahs: 114

Nuktaas: 105682

Tashdeeds: 1253

## ***Miracle of Sequence***

The Quraan Shareef was revealed to Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) over a very long period of twenty-three years. It started with the word '*lqra*' in the cave of Hira when Angel Jibra'eel (Alayhis Salaam) first time came to him with the first verses of *Surah Al Alaq* of The Quraan Shareef. Thereafter revelation of The Quraan Shareef continued in part over the next 23 years. The Qur'aanic verses cover a very wide range of topics and were revealed in relation to situations faced by Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and his companions such as the incidents related to the battlefield, to marital relations with consorts etc. Some *Surahs* like '*Al An'aam*' were revealed in full. On the other hand, it is narrated by Ibn Umar (RA) that Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) said that *Surah Al Baqarah* was revealed in parts over a period of more than nine years.

When any verse or *Surah* was revealed to Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam), he used to call his companions and ask them to write them down.

At the same time, he used to instruct them to place the verse or *Surah* in particular places. It is worth repeating that the sequence of revelation of The Quraan Shareef and the sequence in which it was eventually compiled is different. The sequence that we have in written form today is not the same sequence in which the verses were revealed. Under Divine guidance, Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) used to order his companions to place a particular part of the Quraan Shareef at a particular place. It is well known for example that the first verses that were revealed were from *Surah Al Aqlaq* and they are placed in the 30th *Juz* i.e. the last part of The Quraan Shareef. Uthmaan bin Abu Al 'Aas (RA) narrates that Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) once said when he was sitting with him, "Jibra'eel (Alayhis Salaam) came to me and asked me to place this *Ayah* in this *Surah*."

There are numerous Injeel Shareef which prove beyond any doubt that the present sequence of The Quraan Shareef was established personally by Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) himself only and not by his Sahaabah (RA) later on.

Muslim narrates an authentic Injeel Shareef of Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) from Abu Darda (RA)

"One, who learns the last ten *Aayaat* of *Surah Kahf* by heart, is protected from Dajjaal."

Similarly many Injeel Shareef quote that Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) recited specific *Surahs* such as *Al Baqarah*, *Aal-Imraan*, *Nisaa*, *A'raaf* etc., Bukhari and Muslim narrate that Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) used to recite *Surah Alif Laam Meem Tanzeel* (As *Sajdah*) and *Surah Dahr* in the *Fajar* Salaah of Fridays.

All these Injeel Shareef prove that the *Surahs* were sequenced by Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) himself. The fact is that verses of The Quraan Shareef were collected and compiled by Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) during the Khilaafah of Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA), Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) and Hadhrat Umar (RA) after the departure of Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) from the world. However, we should know that they only collected the verses of The Quraan Shareef that had not been previously collected in one place. They neither added nor subtracted anything from The Quraan Shareef, nor did they change any sequence. The sequence was decided by Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) himself and the sequence that we have today is the sequence decided by Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam). The Sahaabah Kiraam (RA) only compiled all the *Surahs* in one place.

Qaazi Abu Bakr (RA) in *Al Intisaar* says, "The sequence of Al Quraan was an obligatory order and Jibra'eel (Alayhis Salaam) used to tell Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) to place a particular *Aayah* at a particular place."

He further says, "The whole Quraan Shareef was revealed by Allaah Ta'aala who ordered that it be kept safe in written form. Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA) neither deleted anything from it nor did he add anything to it and its sequence and arrangements are the same as arranged by Allaah Ta'aala. Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) who confirmed the same arrangement and sequence. He neither brought any verse forward and nor did take any verse backward from its original position and the Ummah recorded the same sequence from Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam)." (*Al Itqaan*).

The author of *Al Itqaan* writes that: The Quraan Shareef is written in The Guarded Tablet (*Al Lowhul Mahfoodh*) in the same sequence as it is with us and Allaah Ta'aala brought the whole Quraan Shareef down to Aasmaan-e-Duniya from where it was revealed to Rasulullaah SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) 'part by part' as the need arose. The sequence of revelation is different from the sequence of recitation."

Ibn Al Hisaar said:

"The placement of a particular Aayah at a particular place was decided as per Wahy (revelation). Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) used to keep a particular Aayah at a particular place."

## ***Links between Consecutive Surahs***

Another evidence that the textual order of The Quraan is divine and not random can be noted from a study of the links between two consecutive *Surahs* in the *Mushaf*. A few examples would illustrate this point:

1. *Surahs* 1 and 2: The former ends with a supplication to Allaah that He may 'guide us to the straight path' (1:6). The latter starts by indicating the guidance in its second verse: 'This is the book whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto the pious.' (2:2). Hence, this verse gives a *Divine* answer to man's supplication at the end of the first *Surah*.

2. *Surahs* 8 and 9: The last two verses in the former describe the co-operative and brotherly behaviour of the believers and give the good tidings of the generous divine reward prepared for them. *Surah* 9 commences with a warning to the disbelievers, polytheist and hypocrites. Thus, together these represent an impressive and instructive contrast for the reader who believes to induce him to follow the right path and to avoid the wrong.

3. *Surahs* 93 and 94 are both addressed to Rasulullaah SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam). The former *Surah* comforts and tells him: 'Your Rabb has not forsaken you nor does He hate you. Verily, the later period will be better for you than the former.' (*Surah* 93: 1-2).

He is then reminded of Allaah's favours and blessings so far bestowed on him; protecting him when he was an orphan, guiding him when he was at loss and enriching him after being in want (*Surah* 93: 6-8). The *Surah* ends by enjoining Rasulullaah SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) not to oppress the orphan, not to chide the beggar, but to proclaim the Rabb's favours. (*Surah* 93: 9-11). The subsequent *Surah* (94) starts by reminding Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) of some of the Rabb's favours: 'Have We not expanded for you your breast, And removed from you your burden which weighed down your back And exalted for you your mention.' (*Surah* 94: 1-3).

The bond between the two *Surahs* is clearly strong. From these examples and others, indeed from each and every single page of The Quraan it should be clear that this is not an ordinary book of history in which each sentence should follow the preceding one

## ***What is Tafseer?***

The word 'Tafseer' is derived from the root 'fassara' to explain, to expound. It means 'explanation' or 'interpretation'. In technical language the word 'tafseer' refers to explanation, interpretation and commentary on The Quraan, 'Tafseer' refers to, all ways of obtaining knowledge, which contribute to the proper understanding of The Quraan, explains its meaning and clarifies its legal implications. The word 'mufasssir' refers to the person who does the 'Tafseer' and means 'commentator'.

The word 'Ta'weel', which is also used in this connection, is derived from the root 'awwala' and also means explanation, interpretation. In technical language, it similarly refers to explanation and interpretation of The Quraan. 'Tafseer' in the language of the scholars means explanation and clarification. It aims to pronounce knowledge and understanding of the Book of Allaah, to explain its meaning, extract its legal rulings and grasp its underlying reasons. Tafseer explains the 'outer' (zaahir) meanings of The Quraan. Ta'weel is considered by some to mean the explanation of the inner and concealed meanings of The Quraan. Others are of the opinion that there is no difference between 'Tafseer' and 'Ta'weel'.

## ***The Birth and Science of Tafseer***

The four Khulafaa-ur-Raashideen (rightly guided Caliphs) (RA) were undoubtedly the early Mufasssireen of The Quraan since they witnessed the coming of the revelation and learnt directly from Rasoolullah (SallAllahu Alayhi Wasallam) the meanings. Other recognized scholars of The Quraan in the time of Rasoolullah (SallAllahu Alayhi Wasallam) were:

- i. Abdullaah Bin Abbaas (RA),
- ii. Abdullaah bin Mas'ood (RA),
- iii. Ubai bin K'ab (RA),
- iv. Zaid bin Thaabit (RA),
- v. Abu Moosa Al Ash'ari (RA),
- vi. Abdullaah bin Zubair (RA),

The leaders of riwaayah in tafseer, taken in order of the amount they related were, Ibn Abbaas (RA), Ibn Mas'ood (RA), Ali (RA) and Ubai bin K'ab (RA) .

## ***Kinds of Tafseer***

**There are two kinds of Tafseer:**

### ***1. Al Tafseer Bil Ma'thoor or Bil Riwaayah***

These Tafaaseer refer to the explanations and interpretations of the Noble Quraan by The Quraan, the Injeel, sayings of the Sahabah (RA) and the sayings of the Taabi'een (R.A) in Arabic.

### ***2. Al Tafseer Bil-Ma'qool or Bir-Ra'yi***

In this kind of Tafseer, the commentator relies on his own intellectual reasoning and initiative to interpret the verses of The Quraan.

A disturbing present day trend is that even those who possess little or no knowledge of Arabic vocabulary offer their personal opinion on the basis of vernacular translations of The Quraan. The proponents of such ideas argue that since every man has the ability to reason, he has the right to interpret The Quraan. According to them, one does not need guidance from a learned person or the Tafaaseer (commentaries of The Quraan) written by our learned scholars. Such proposals and encouragements can only lead to the dishonouring of The Quraan.

There are none who understand The Quraan as Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) understood it and taught it to his Sahabah (RA). Therefore, after Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam), the most capable Mufasssireen were the Sahabah (RA) who were the teachers of the Taabi'een. When seeking knowledge about the words of The Quraan, one should turn to the acknowledged Mufasssireen and their 'Tafaaseer' and not to one's personal opinion.

The Mufasssireen have laid down that anyone attempting to write a commentary on the Noble Quraan should be well versed in the following subjects. As can be seen that it is not possible for everybody to understand the underlying significance and real meaning of The Quraan.

When one does not find the Tafseer of a particular *Aayah* of The Quraan, or the Sunnah or the words of the Sahaabah (RA), many scholars (A'immah) turn to the words of the successors (Taabi'een).

## ***Various Tafseer Sciences***

1. LUGHAT. This refers to philology of the language, which helps to understand the appropriate meanings of words.
2. NAHW. This is the syntax, a branch of grammar, which helps to understand the relation of a sentence with another. It also refers to 'T'raab' (vowel sounds) of a word. A change in 'T'raab' often means a change of meaning.
3. SARF. This is the etymology, the study of the sources and derivation of words and conjunctions. The meaning of a word is determined by the source and its conjugation.
4. ISHTIQAQ. This refers to the derivatives. It is necessary to have the knowledge of derivatives and their sources, because if a word has been derived from two different sources, it will have two different meanings.
5. ILM UL BAYAAN. This refers to semantics. The meanings of phrase constructions are understood from the knowledge of figures of speech, like similes and metaphors, which express shades of meaning.
6. ILM UL BADEE. This refers to the knowledge of rhetoric, which reveals the beauty of a language and its implications.
7. ILM UL QIRAA'AH. This refers to the knowledge of the art of pronunciation, because different methods of recitation sometimes convey different meanings.
8. ILM UL AQAAID. This refers to the knowledge of the fundamentals of faith. This is necessary to explain certain analogies.
9. USUL UL FIQH. This refers to the knowledge of the principles of Islaamic jurisprudence.
10. ASBAAB UN NUZOOL. This refers to the particular commandments that have subsequently been annulled or changed so that the cancelled commandments may be distinguished from the standing ones.
11. ILM UL FIQH. This refers to the knowledge of Islaamic jurisprudence. It is only through this knowledge that we arrive at a complete understanding of general principles.
12. ILM UL HADEETH. This refers to the knowledge of such Ahaadeeth that provide commentaries on certain verses of The Quraan.
13. ILM UL WAHABI. This refers to the gifted understanding bestowed by Allaah upon his selected ones.



# ***Self Opinionated Tafseer is Haraam and Forbidden in the Shariah***

Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) said: "Whosoever says anything from his own opinion in matters of The Quraan should prepare his abode in the Fire."

In another tradition it is mentioned: "Whosoever says anything in matters of The Quraan without knowledge should prepare his abode in Jahannam." (*Sunan At Tirmidhi*).

One Injeel further states: "Whosoever speaks in matter of The Quraan with mere self opinion and utters that which is correct. then he too has erred."

In short, he who deviates in his explanation from the views of the Sahaabah (RA) and the Taabi'een is wrong; nay, he is a mistaken innovator, even though he is a Mujtahid (trying honestly to reach the truth) and will hopefully be forgiven by Allaah.

We have discussed various methods of knowledge and ways of knowing the truth. We know that the Sahaabah (RA), the Taabi'een and their followers studied The Quraan very carefully, and that they knew the meaning and the interpretation of its verses better than anyone else, just as they knew best the truth which Allaah revealed to Rasulullaah (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam). Hence, those who deviate from their views. and explain The Quraan on different lines are wrong both in the ideas they expound and the arguments to offer. Their ideas have no value.

## ***Commentary by Self-Opinion***

Imaam Suyooti (RA) writes in his famous book *Al Itqaan* on the authority of Ibn Naqeeb (RA) that there are five ways of providing commentary by self-opinion.

1. To comment without acquiring the relevant sciences of Deen.
2. A person begins to comment on the Mutashaabihaat (the ambiguous verses of The Quraan) the meaning and object of which are known to Allaah alone.
3. To comment in such a manner to prove correct a deviated school of thought.
4. To assert absolutely about a certain verse without proof that Allaah Ta'aala definitely meant a certain thing.
5. To comment merely according to one's desire and fancy. (*Al Itqaan Li Uloomil Quraan v. 2 p. 183*).

## ***The Israelite Traditions***

Israelite Ahaadeeth are not to be believed; they can only be used as supporting evidence. There are three kinds of Israelite Ahaadeeth.

- One that we can regard as true: if they are supported by our Ahaadeeth.
- The second category is regarded as false if they are contradicted by our Ahaadeeth.
- The third, which fall neither in this category nor in that, because our sources are silent about them.

We shall neither believe them nor disbelieve them. They may be quoted as the Hadeeth permits: but let us note that most of them have no value so far as religious matters are concerned.

# ***The Etiquette of Reading and Reciting the Quraan***

1. Keep The Quraan in a clean place.
2. In reciting The Quraan, seek only Allaah's pleasure and not any worldly gain.
3. Concentrate fully and leave aside all other preoccupations.
4. Be ritually clean, and sit in a clean place.
5. Preferably, sit facing the Qiblah.
6. Ibn Mas'ood (RA) read The Quraan in the Masjid while kneeling on both knees. (*Abu Dawood, see Kamaal, op. cit., p.114*).
7. Observe humility, tranquility and respect.
8. Begin with *A'oodhu billaah ...* and *Bismillaah*.
9. Read with a pleasant tone.
10. Ask Allaah's blessing when reading a verse that contains a promise, and ask Allaah's help when reading a verse that contains a threat.
11. Repeat important verses many times.
12. Say *Saddaqaallaah uladheem*, at the end of the recitation, and close with a du'aa that Allaah may accept it from you.
13. Let no day pass without reading The Quraan.
14. Do not read The Quraan in a manner that disturbs others.
15. Sometimes read The Quraan alone and sometimes in a group (your family too!)
16. Reply, if someone gives Salaam while you read.
17. Stop reciting when you hear the Adhaan.
19. Observe Sajdah at Tilaawah.
20. Memorise as much as you can.

## **Abdullaah bin Mas'ood (RA) says:**

“A Qaari of the Quraan should distinguish himself from those people who are sleeping by remaining awake until late in the night, by weeping while others are laughing, by keeping quiet while others are gossiping, by humility from the arrogant and by remaining thoughtful from those who are enjoying.”

## **Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar (RA) says:**

A Qaari of the Quraan should not gossip like others.

He should not behave foolishly like fools.

He should forgive others and be good to others as in his chest he has the treasure of The Quraan. He should talk less, laugh less and live with dignity. He should not have vanity and pride.

He should not indulge in useless discussions and quarrels. He should not harm others.

He should help others when they seek his help.

He should teach others the teachings of The Quraan.

He should have high morals.

He should himself act according to the Qur'aanic commandments and he should try his best to understand The Quraan.

The Mashaaikh have mentioned the following six external and six internal rules of reverence when reading The Noble Quraan.

## **RULES OF EXTERNAL REVERENCE:**

1. Perform wudhu and then sit facing the Qiblah in an extremely dignified manner (It is disrespectful to sit leaning

against the wall with feet out in front while reciting the Noble Quraan. This should be avoided. Likewise, the Quraan should not be placed directly on the lap).

2. Do not read rapidly, but read at a moderate pace with correct pronunciation.

3. Try to weep, even if you have to compel yourself to do so.

4. The response to the verses of mercy or of punishment should prompt one to ask for Allaah's blessings and for Allaah's help.

5. Read in a melodious voice, because there are numerous Ahaadeeth which emphasise this.

6. Read in a low voice if insincerity is feared or it may cause disturbance to others, otherwise read aloud.

### **RULES OF REVERENCE WHEN READING THE QURAAAN:**

1. The heart should be full of the glory of The Quraan i.e. realizing how sublime it is.

2. Bear in the heart the Loftiness, Majesty and Magnificence of Almighty A1laah Whose revelation is The Quraan.

3. The heart should be free from distraction and doubts.

4. Dwell upon the meaning and enjoy reading the verses.

5. Submit your heart to the subject matter of the verses you are reading. For instance, when reading the verses about the mercy of Allaah, the heart should be filled with delight. When reading the verses of punishment, the heart should tremble with fear.

6. The ears should be as attentive as if Almighty Allaah Himself is speaking to him personally and the reader is listening to Him.

May Allaah out of His mercy and kindness grant all of us the ability to read The Quraan according to these rules of reverence, Aameen!

### ***Interesting Book to Read on the Quraan***

'Commentators of the Holy Quraan' by Moulana Qaazi Muhammed Zahid ul Hussaini was written in 1992. It lists with brief notes the names and history of the Commentators of The Quraan from the first to the 141<sup>st</sup> century Hijri and also includes present-day commentaries.

All together some 625 commentators are mentioned.

### ***Some Translations of the Quraan***

The following are some of the notable translations of The Quraan that are currently available.

1. Mohammed Marmaduke Picktall (1930).

2. Abdullaah Yusuf Ali (1934, 1938). – A Dawoodi (Isma'eeli) Bohra Shi'a scholar.

3. Moulana Abdur Rahmaan Tariq (July 1996, Pakistan).

4. Mahmud Y. Zayid (1980, Lebanon).

5. Abdul Haqq and Aisha Bewley (1999, England).

6. Moulana Daryabadi (India).

7. Dr. Mohsin Khan (Madinah) and Taqi Uddeen Hilaali. – A Moroccan Salafi scholar.

(Mufti A. H. Elias 1423/2002).

# Translator's Foreword

All praise belongs to Allaah Whose word is with us in the form of the Quraan.

May He shower His

choicest favours and mercy on His final messenger Muhammad (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam), who conveyed to us the complete message of Islaam.

Mankind is extremely fortunate to have with them a message from their Creator in the form of The Quraan, Allaah's message has remained unchanged throughout the centuries and we here in the twenty-first century have with us the same Quraan that was revealed to Muhammad (SallAllaahu Alayhi Wasallam) more than fourteen hundred years ago.

Every scholar of The Quraan will readily admit that no translation of The Quraan can capture the depth and comprehensiveness of the original Arabic Quraan. In fact, even a treatise written in the most eloquent Arabic cannot match the beauty and style of The Quraan. The brilliance of The Quraan is therefore not indebted to the Arabic language, but to its divine origin and nature.

In preparing this translation of The Quraan, the dilemma was whether to use very ornate and elegant language that could compromise clear understanding for most people or to use a simple and clear style of language. Because the intention was to make The Quraan clear to every person, the second style was chosen, even though it may at times lack the dignity and lofty tone. It was also chosen because thousands of English-speaking people who are not very proficient in the language found the lofty language of other translations difficult to understand. This translation caters for their needs by providing where necessary synonyms between brackets. It is the language of only the Divine that can combine exceptional eloquence and ease of understanding.

Unlike in previous translations, footnotes are not used in this translation. Rather the explanations that have been given between brackets, serve multiple purposes. Firstly, they save the reader the need to look for the corresponding footnote that often hampers one's train of thought and understanding. Secondly, the explanations enhance the meaning of a verse by adding text that is often hidden. This is especially necessary in a translation of the Quraan because the Arabic text is extremely compact and rich in meaning, and to render the same meaning in another language requires the use of many more words. By using words between brackets, the essential text of The Quraan is not confused with the additional words that are required to promote understanding.

To ensure that the explanatory text is not mistaken for the original text of The Quraan, Qur'aanic text is printed in bold print with a larger font size. The explanatory notes are not in bold print but are in italics and use a smaller font. The translation has been kept as close as possible to the Arabic text. For this reason, certain Arabic idioms and expressions translated into English may not make perfect sense to English-speakers. However, explanations have been given between brackets. In keeping the translation close to the Arabic text, the various speakers in The Quraan in the first person (I), or in the second person (You) or in the third person (He or She) have also been left as they appear in the Arabic text. This may seem confusing to English speakers because the speakers are often changed in Arabic to engage the readers' attention.

In most cases, the words between brackets should be read as part of the bold sentence. However, there are many instances when they serve only as explanations or synonyms, in which case they cannot be read as part of the sentence. When the word/s between brackets do not appear to be synonyms, they refer to alternate translations or alternate commentaries because many Arabic words have multiple meanings. However, all of this will become clear as one reads through the translation. After grasping the complete meaning of a verse, one should read the bold print without the italic print to understand the essence of the message.

Many Arabic terms have been used in the translation instead of their English equivalents because their meanings are extremely rich and often complex. The English equivalents do not do justice to them and may lead to misunderstanding. All these and many other terms have been explained in the glossary. It is strongly recommended that one reads through and understands the terms in the glossary before reading through the translation. The meanings of words like 'lmaan', 'kufr', 'shirk', 'Sabr', 'Aayaat' and 'Taqwa' should be understood completely, keeping the connotation of the entire definition in mind at all times.

The circumstances leading to the revelation of certain verses are often mentioned. One should always bear in mind that the relevance of most of these verses is not restricted to just the historical circumstances. The verses have much relevance to any such situation throughout the passage of time. The meanings of the Aayaat should not always be restricted to the circumstances of revelation. Readers should refer to their Ulema to shed further light on this.

It will be appreciated that the complete commentary of every verse obviously cannot be included in this translation. The reader may therefore find commentaries on The Quraan in other books that also provide other explanations. This is not to be interpreted as a discrepancy because some verses lend themselves to several interpretation. The reader may also notice differences between the translation given in this book and other translations because many verses can also be translated differently, each one being correct. We should therefore not be surprised to see verse 65 of *Surah 12* translated as, '**This measure is inadequate**' while other translations state, '**This quantity is easy (for the king to give)**'. Because of the comprehensiveness of The Quraan, every meaning is equally applicable.

The current translation is not a Tafseer (detailed exegesis) of The Quraan but a translation of The Quraan with brief explanatory notes. The reader should therefore not expect to find every line comprehensively explained. Readers must refer to detailed Tafaaseer (plural of Tafseer) to grasp the complete meaning of The Quraan together with the reference of every verse.

In preparing the explanatory notes, reference has been made to the well-known Tafseer called *Jalaalayn* written by Allaamah Jalaalud Deen Mahalli and Allaamah Jalaalud Deen Suyooti in the ninth Islaamic century. This great work was used in conjunction with its detailed commentary called *Kamaalayn* written by Allaamah Muhammad Na'eem Deobandi. Extensive reference was also made to a Tafseer titled *Anwaarul Bayaan* prepared by Allaamah Mufti Aashiq Ilaahi Madani. This Tafseer is also available in English as *Illuminating Discourses on The Noble Quraan*. May Allaah reward abundantly these illustrious scholars of The Quraan for their invaluable services to humankind.

Only authentic Ahaadeeth have been quoted in this translation and great pains have been taken to ensure that Allaah's message to humankind is portrayed as accurately as possible. However, as humans, we are all prone to error. Readers' comments or suggestions will be greatly appreciated. May Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala accept this effort and make it a means of salvation for all who have contributed to it in any way.

**Ismail Ebrahim**, Friday, 18 Rabee ul Awwal 1423 A.H. Benoni, South Africa. 31 May 2002

## ***Current Translation***

### **Preparation of the current translation followed the following sequence**

Moulana Ismail Ebrahim did the major part of the translating. Mufti Elias added further explanatory notes within brackets from *Tafseer Uthmaani* by Allaamah Shabeer Ahmed Uthmaani (AR). Thereafter Br. Ismail Khathrada edited the language without changing the meaning and interpretation of The Quraan. We have also included a summary of each parah (*juz*) and its link to the previous one as an introductory guideline to the reader.

We praise only Allaah for granting us the ability to reach this stage. All errors are due to our human shortcomings. Any comments, suggestions and criticism will be most welcome. We make du'aa that this work becomes a source of benefit to mankind and a fountain of inspiration for the seekers of truth.

(Mufti) A.H.Elias1432/2002